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ABSTRACT

A study investigated whether learners of English as a Second Language can learn implicatures through explicit teaching. Data were drawn from an earlier experiment and analyzed for this purpose. Subjects were foreign university students with advanced English proficiency. Six types of implicature were taught. Students were encouraged to analyze the implicatures and focus on intended interpretation within context. Instructional materials included both conventional handouts with examples, and cartoons or comic strips. Often, students were asked to find examples of implicatures in their first languages. During discussion, additional contextual and linguistic factors were discussed, including level of formality and relationships between interlocutors, cultural values, expectation, and intonation. It was found that in genera' the implicature lessons were successful and enjoyable, and that some types of implicature were easier to teach than others. Additional descriptive, theoretical research on implicatures is recommended, particularly in classification of types. A brief bibliography and the original handouts on six implicature types are appended. Contains 16 references. (MSE)

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David Broersma

21 February 1994

Do Chickens Have Lips?
Conversational Implicature in the ESL Classroom.

Over the past eight years, Bouton (1988, 1989, 1990, 1992a, 1992b, forthcoming) has argued that Grice's (1975, 1981) conversational implicatures are learned slowly, if at all, by non-native learners of English if explicit instruction is not offered. In the Spring and Fall semesters of 1993 on the University of Illinois campus, Bouton ran pilot and full-fledged experiments in ESL classrooms and found statistically significant improvement in the interpretation of implicatures on the part of students in the experimental groups who were explicitly taught about implicatures (Bouton: forthcoming, personal communication). After participating in Bouton's study as a graduate teaching assistant, I reviewed my own teaching journal and transcripts of my lessons as well as the teaching journals and transcripts of my three fellow participants in the experimental sections of the project in both its pilot and full-fledged manifestations (Broersma, 1993; Malatesta, 1993; Nicholls, 1993; & Noble 1993). My goal in analyzing these records of what happened in the classroom was to discern the approaches which were taken in presenting the material, to discover which material presented the most difficulty in the classroom, and to consider issues which, if resolved, would make the teaching of implicatures more seamless. In this paper, I will begin by discussing the context in which implicatures were taught and then describe the results of my survey of the teaching data.

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THE CLASSROOM CONTEXT

The classes used for the experimental groups of this study were ESL classes at the University of Illinois (U of I). The subjects were international graduate students, most of whom were in their first semester at the university. They were placed in ESL 111 (the course under observation) on the basis of a local exam called the U of I English Placement Test, and their proficiency in English was advanced. The course, though primarily focusing on academic writing, gives opportunity for reading and discussion, and the lessons on implicatures were introduced as part of the discussion portion.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The teaching materials used in the main experiment were developed by Broersma (1993) based on similar handouts used by Nicholls (1993) in the pilot study. A copy of the handouts used for the six implicature lessons can be found in Appendix A.

Each of the handouts correspond to a different type of implicature. The six types of implicature we taught and examples of them from the handouts are presented here for convenience (the implicatures are in bold):

The Pope Q (Pope Question):

Setting: Paul and Georgette are discussing a mutual acquaintance who is always running late.

Paul: Do you expect Sheila to be late for the party tonight?
Georgette: **Is the Pope Catholic?**

Understated (or Indirect) Criticism:

Setting: George and Sheila are looking for a house to buy. Sheila just went to look at a house in their price range and is reporting back to George.

George: So, what did you think of the house?
Sheila: **Well, it had a nice mailbox.**
George: Are there any other houses we can visit?

Relevance:

Setting: A woman has just ordered two scrambled eggs for breakfast in a restaurant. When the eggs arrive, they look very small.

Marlene: Is this really two eggs or just one?
Waitress: That's two eggs.
Marlene: **What do you have back there, pigeons?**

Irony:

Setting: Jill has just baked a cake which looks horrible.

Jill: What do you think of my cake?
Julie: **It's a real work of art.**

And (Sequence):

I went downtown and ate an ice cream cone. (Going downtown precedes eating ice cream.)

Scalar & The Minimum Requirement Rule:

Setting: John is talking to Mary who has moved to another town and has now returned for a visit.

John: So, are you staying with your parents?
Mary: Well, yes, I'm staying with my mother.

Setting: George is talking to the Admissions secretary about his application to the university. In order to be accepted, applicants must turn in at least three letters of recommendation. George has five professors who have agreed to write recommendation letters for him.

Secretary: Do you have three letters of recommendation, George?
George: **Yes.**

The handouts described above formed the starting point for most of the teachers since they give examples of the implicatures in question and then ask questions which help students focus on the intended interpretation. Students read the examples, answered the questions, and tried to develop some generalizations about the implicature. Therefore, in most cases the approach was inductive, although on days when the lessor was, of necessity, somewhat rushed, a more deductive approach was occasionally used.

A key feature of implicatures which we tried to highlight in the handouts is that the interplay between an utterance and its context is crucial. It is the context of a given utterance that causes one to understand that it is not supposed to be taken at face value. As a way of trying to make this point, on some of the lessons (see Appendix A), we used an utterance in two contexts: one where it has an indirect meaning, and one where it would be taken literally. This is the case with the third example on the relevance handout. When the utterance, *What do you have back there, pigeons?*, is an implicature, it really means "This serving of eggs looks too small." When the context is changed, the comment does not have the same indirect meaning; it really is an inquiry about birds.

The handouts were not the only focus of the lessons, however, and all of the teachers adapted and revised the materials to match their styles as teachers. Some of the teachers found that an excellent resource for sample implicatures to use in review or in presenting new material is the cartoon pages in daily newspapers. I used a "Calvin & Hobbes" strip one day in my class , and my students really enjoyed finding and describing the implicature. Political cartoons are also a good source of implicature, but

their only drawback (if it is a drawback) is that they often derail students onto unexpected topics of discussion.

Teachers do not have to use the handouts in Appendix A or wait for a textbook of implicatures to arrive on the market to be able to introduce the concepts of implicatures. As part of Bouton's project, we looked through numerous ESL textbooks with dialogues and found many examples of conversational implicatures which the textbook authors had not highlighted. Some of these we used in the handouts, and some we used as additional examples in class. It is possible, then, for teachers to find examples of implicatures in textbooks they are already using and simply ask additional questions to draw out the meaning of these implicatures and the underlying processes at work in interpreting them.

Consider the following dialogue from *Say It Naturally* (Wall 1987:249):

Patrick is in the drugstore, looking around, confused.

Clerk: May I help you?
Patrick: Yes, please. **I'd like to buy some toothpaste.**
Clerk: It's over there by the back entrance--on your right. . .

In this case, the implicature is explicated by the clerk's response. Patrick is really asking "Where is the toothpaste?" The clerk's directions to the toothpaste make it clear that he or she understood Patrick's intended meaning. This is an example of a relevance implicature. The clerk's comment is not a relevant response to Patrick's comment unless one interprets it in light of the context. As a teacher using this text it would not take much additional effort to use this dialogue as an illustration of conversational implicature. In this case, one could ask, "What does Patrick mean by the comment, 'I'd like to buy some toothpaste'?" and "How can you tell?" In this example, the question "How can you tell?" draws attention to

the opportunity an observer of a conversation has to interpret the implicature based on the response of the interlocutor, but we also taught students about recognizing and responding to implicatures when they were the interlocutors. Although the author of *Say It Naturally* (Wall, 1987) asks some excellent questions about the dialogue (which is longer than this extract), the implicature is not discussed.

The four different teachers introduced the topic of conversational implicatures in different ways. One teacher introduced the topic by asking, "Ah, excuse me. Doug, do you know what time it is?" The student answered, "Eleven thirty" as might be expected, and then the teacher introduced the concept of indirect speech generally and implicatures specifically. This teacher also used other common questions which often generate implicatures when he was reviewing the implicature material: "Is John there?" (on the telephone); "It sure is cold in here." (with the window open). Another teacher opened his discussion of implicatures by having his students take a careful look at the word implicature to see what other words they "saw" in it. When the students came up with the word "imply," the teacher went into a brief explanation of underlying meaning and indirectness. The other two teachers began by explaining that in some communicative situations, speakers of English choose to speak indirectly, and that using conversational implicatures is a way to be indirect.

Most of the lessons ended with students taking a few minutes to come up with examples of implicatures in their own languages (see Appendix B). These examples were then shared with the class, and they served multiple purposes: they gave the instructors evidence that the students in fact understood the implicature; they helped students to reflect on the ways implicature is present in their own languages; and they gave students a

chance to practice the new information they were learning. In many cases, the implicatures were not present in the students' first languages, and when that was the case, the lessons introduced new concepts, but in the cases where the implicatures were present in the students' first languages, the lessons raised students' awareness that such things also happen in English.

In addition to examples from their own languages, students were also asked to make and perform dialogues of their own (in English) to illustrate the use of the implicature they were working on (see Appendix B, the "Irony" section). An example of a student-generated dialogue is the following:

KuoLung: If you read the newspaper in China, you will find out that it is a free country.
Dave: Is that true?
KuoLung: Yeah. China's so free, you can go to jail anytime you want.

This strategy was also used to review previously learned implicatures as the project progressed.

In addition to the planned presentation of material, there were many unplanned, but useful, discussions which resulted. In several of the classes, issues of levels of formality and relationships between interlocutors arose in connection to the use of implicatures. To illustrate, I will quote from one of the teaching journals:

> For example, during our session on Pope Q questions, one of my students--formerly a successful engineer in S. Korea--asked if this kind of implicature could be used by an employee to his employer. This prompted a great deal of discussion wherein students suggested additional scenarios such as advisor/student, student/student, friend/friend. The students concluded that speakers with less status may not use this kind of implicature without risk of insulting their hearers. (Nicholls, 1993)

Other discussions which emerged out of the implicature lessons had to do with cultural values. For example, in one of the classes, a discussion ensued about the American characteristic of praising things in superlative terms, so that one must use the most extreme forms of praise to convince another that

one is sincere in one's approbation. In other words, if I tell a friend that her new car is "fine," my friend is likely to feel that I don't really like the vehicle in question (Scalar implicature). Since there is much in implicature which relies on background knowledge--most notably *cultural* background knowledge--such discussions were essential to the teaching goals.

The teachers also reported cases of highlighting implicatures which happened naturally in the classroom. For example, one of the teachers asked, "Where is everyone today?" at the beginning of one class, and his students responded, "It's raining." The teacher then took advantage of the opportunity to point out that his students had just used an implicature which indicated that they had correctly interpreted the impact of his original question: he was not really asking where the students were as much as why they were not in class. Of course, teachers cannot always be listening for implicatures, but the teachers in this study found that they were much more sensitive to examples of implicature after teaching them, and it took relatively little effort to comment on good examples in class. One of the teachers would occasionally discuss recently-heard implicatures as part of a warm-up activity for her class before moving on to other topics.

The strategies enumerated above are not an exhaustive list of the things teachers did with their classes--they also had students write paragraphs about the meaning of example implicatures, had question and answer sessions about the various implicature types, and more--but it is indicative of the kinds of things one could do with implicatures in the classroom.

AREAS OF DIFFICULTY

Although, on the whole, the implicature lessons were successful and enjoyable, some of the types of implicature were easier to teach than others.

As Bouton (forthcoming) points out, "we can divide the implicatures that were used in this study into two sets: those that are in some sense formulaic and those that are not." Not surprisingly, the more formulaic implicatures such as the Pope Q were easier to teach and easier for students to grasp. In the Pope Q implicature, for example, one can stress that the obvious answer to the second question is also the answer to the first question. So, in the example given above, the obvious "yes" answer to "Is the Pope Catholic?" is also the answer to the question about Sheila being on time for the party. On the other hand, as Bouton (forthcoming) also notes, the relevance implicatures, which are more "idiosyncratically dependent on the relationship between a particular utterance and its specific context," are more difficult to teach and learn. It is impossible to teach all of the background knowledge necessary for interpreting all relevance implicatures--indeed, native speakers will occasionally lack the requisite background knowledge--so one must be satisfied with raising one's students' awareness of the potential communicative minefields which relevance implicatures present. The relevance implicature is also difficult because it is so broad. There are many ways in which a comment or question could be considered irrelevant and need to be reinterpreted. For example, one might change the subject completely because the topic of conversation is uncomfortable, or one might make a comment which, although it is not relevant, is analogous to the conversation (e.g. George: What happened to your leg? Sheila: I went jogging.) Thus, potentially, the category could have more descriptive power than it currently has.

Another area of difficulty also has to do with the classification system, and that is the potential overlap between the understated (or indirect) criticism implicature and the scalar implicature (the scalar implicature is

described in Levinson (1983)). An example of the scalar implicature is the following:

Anne: Do you like my new coat?
George: **It's pretty nice.**

One could imagine in this case a scale of comments about the coat which would range from o.k. to breathtakingly beautiful: <o.k., not bad, pretty nice, beautiful, wonderful, breathtakingly beautiful> . George's comment would entail the comments to the left of "pretty nice," but would not entail the comments to the right of it. In this case, Anne, who is expecting lavish praise, will consider George's comment as being tepid. The problem, then, lies in the fact that understated criticism such as the mailbox example given above is not only interpreted as criticism because Sheila chose a relatively minor point to praise ("damning with faint praise"), but because she also left more fulsome praise of the house unsaid. In other words, by offering praise on a minor point one excludes the possibility of more exuberant praise. This similarity between the understated criticism and scalar implicatures only presents a problem for the teachers and learners inasmuch as the two categories are presented as unique and separate entities. If the connection between the two is made more explicit, the confusion could be eliminated.

An additional level of confusion can arise with some of the types of implicatures when the role of intonation is added, although this is less of a problem than it might first appear. It is possible, using intonation, to make an "o.k." sound better than a "breathtakingly beautiful," and intonation can also signal excitement, sarcasm, and so forth, so it is important that students be alerted to this dimension. In general, one can say, the more ambiguous the implicature, the greater role intonation plays. This is particularly true of irony implicatures: if it is obvious that a person means the opposite of what

he or she is saying, intonation is not as essential as a signal of irony, and vice versa.

CONCLUSION

The problems with classification mentioned above illustrate the need for more descriptive, theoretical work on implicatures. Now that Bouton's study has indicated that implicatures can be taught with success, there is need for work on a more pedagogically powerful taxonomy of implicature types. It may be that relevance implicatures cannot be subdivided more than they already are, but it seems when teaching them, that it must be possible to categorize them more usefully.

Even without additional descriptive work, teaching implicatures is engaging, interesting, and provocative. The students in the four experimental sections responded with enthusiasm at the opportunity to discuss implicatures and the additional topics which invariably arose as a consequence of the implicature study. Teaching conversational implicatures does not take excessive amounts of time, but it can give students an edge in pragmatic competence.

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APPENDIX A

ESL 111 Section M
David Broersma
Fall 1993
Implicature 1: Introduction & Pope Question Formula

Introduction: In many languages, and also in English, people often do not say exactly what they intend to communicate. Sometimes in English, we imply information and expect our friends to figure out what we really mean. One kind of indirect speech is called *conversational implicature.* Conversational implicatures take different forms, but they are always a result of the interaction between language and context. For an illustration of one kind of conversational implicature, look at the examples below.

Instructions: Read the following examples and answer the questions underneath each example.

Example 1: Paul and Georgette are discussing a mutual acquaintance who is always running late.

Paul: Do you expect Sheila to be late for the party tonight?
Georgette: **Is the Pope Catholic?**

What is the answer to Georgette's question? What do you think she means?

Example 2: Celia and Ron are discussing their boss who is very unpleasant.

Celia: So, do you think Mr. Stinguy will give me a raise?
Ron: **Do cows fly?**

What does Ron mean?

Example 3: Larry and Charlene are talking about a test they recently took.

Charlene: Do you think you got an "A" on the test?
Larry: **Do chickens have lips?**

What does Larry mean?

Discussion: In each of the examples above, the second person answers the first person with another question, so we have the formula

Question 1 + Question 2 = Answer.

In each case the obvious answer to Question 2 becomes the answer to Question 1 also.

For example, In the first case Paul asks, "Do you expect Sheila to be late for the party tonight?" (Question 1). Georgette answers, "**Is the Pope Catholic?**" (Question 2). Since the obvious answer to Question 2 is "yes" (the Pope is the leader of the Catholics), then Georgette's answer to Paul is also "yes."

Activity (5 minutes): Do you have examples of this kind of formula in your own language? Try to think of some examples to share with the class.

ESL 111 Section M
David Broersma
Fall 1993
Implicature 2: Understated Criticism

Instructions: Read the following examples and answer the questions underneath each example.

Example 1:

Lee: How do you like my new sweater?
Sandy: **It's an interesting color.**

[*Functioning in English* p. 25]

What does Sandy think of Lee's sweater? How can you tell?

Example 2: Laura has spent a lot of money on a new suit, and she asks her roommate, Brenda about it.

Laura: You haven't said a word about my new suit, Brenda. Don't you like it?
Brenda: I'm sorry I didn't say anything about it sooner. **It certainly is unique. I don't think I have seen anything like it before.**

[*Say It Naturally* p. 205]

Does Brenda like the new suit? What makes you think so?

Example 3: George and Sheila are looking for a house to buy. Sheila just went to look at a house in their price range and is reporting back to George.

George: So, what did you think of the house?
Sheila: **Well, it had a nice mailbox.**
George: Are there any other houses we can visit?

What does Sheila think about the house? Why does George ask about visiting other houses?

Part 2: Now, consider the sentence in bold from Example 2 in a different context:

Hernando: Can I see your watch for a minute, Sara? Wow! That's nice! Did you get it here?
Sara: No, I got it in Switzerland when I was there last year.
Hernando: Well, I really like it! **I don't think I have seen anything like it before.**
Sara: Thanks, I like it a lot, too.

This is the same comment that Brenda made, but does it mean the same thing? What is the difference?

Discussion: In examples 1-3 above, Sandy, Brenda, and Sheila are indirectly criticizing the things being discussed. They do not directly say, "I don't like that sweater/suit/house," but they imply their dislike by praising a quality of each item which is relatively minor. For example, when Sheila says that the house "has a nice mailbox," she is implying that more important aspects of the house are not so nice. We have an idiom to describe this implicature: if you use this implicature, you are "damning something with faint praise."

Activity (5 minutes): Can you think of an example of this kind of implicature in your language? Try to write out an example to share with the rest of the class.

ESL 111 Section M
David Broersma
Fall 1993
Implicature 3: Relevance

Instructions: Read the following examples and answer the questions underneath each example.

Example 1: Patrick is in the drugstore, looking around, confused.

Clerk: May I help you?
Patrick: Yes, please. **I'd like to buy some toothpaste**.
Clerk: It's over there by the back entrance--on your right.

[*Say It Naturally*, p. 249]

What does Patrick mean by the comment in bold? How can you tell?

Example 2: A husband has been watching a football game on TV for the past two hours.

Wife: **That program on drug abuse is supposed to be excellent, honey. Is the game almost over?**
Husband: About 30 more minutes--maybe more.
Wife: **It seems like you've been watching it all night. I hope it's over by 9:30.**

[*SIN*, p.207 (adapted)]

What does the wife want to do?

Example 3: A woman has ordered two scrambled eggs for breakfast in a restaurant. When the eggs arrive, they look very small.

Marlene: Is this really two eggs or just one?
Waitress: That's two eggs.
Marlene: **What do you have back there, pigeons?**

What does Marlene mean when she asks about the pigeons?

Part 2: Now, consider the sentence in bold from Example 3 in a different context:

Joe is visiting a farmer friend of his who raises unusual animals. Joe hears a lot of birds fluttering around behind a barn and asks

Joe: **What do you have back there, pigeons?**

This is the same comment that Marlene made, but does it mean the same thing? What is the difference?

Discussion: Sometimes Americans say things which on the surface do not make any sense. When we hear something which seems to be irrelevant, we try to reinterpret what was said so it matches the conversation. We expect people to say things which are connected in meaning to the topic of the conversation we are having, and when they don't, we try to find an acceptable alternative meaning.

Activity (5 minutes): With a partner, develop a short dialogue (like the examples) with at least one line which contains an implicature like the ones we have been studying today. When you finish, you will present your dialogue to the class.

ESL 111 Section M
David Broersma
Fall 1993
Implicature 4: Irony

Instructions: Read the following examples and answer the questions underneath each example.

Example 1: Jill has just baked a cake which looks horrible.

Jill: What do you think of my cake?
Julie: **It's a real work of art.**

What does Julie mean? How can you tell?

Example 2: George just discovered that he has to take another class when he thought he was finished with the requirements for his degree.

George: I won't be able to graduate this semester. I have to take a course I didn't know about.
Brenda: **You must be really excited about that!**

What does Brenda mean?

Example 3: Sharif and Imran are talking about a friend who is failing all of his classes.

Sharif: I don't know why Fred wastes his time and money going to school.
Imran: **He's really a scholar, isn't he?**

What does Imran really think about Fred?

Discussion: This kind of implicature occurs when we say one thing and mean the exact opposite. Usually this kind of implicature becomes obvious when we know the context. For example, if we know that George is really upset that he has to stay for another semester, then Brenda's comment in example 2 does not make any sense. Of course George is *not* excited about his bad news. Because Brenda's comment is so obviously out of place, we know that she must mean to express a completely different idea.

Activity (5 minutes): Working with a partner, develop a short dialogue which uses irony. The dialogues will be presented to the rest of the class.

ESL 111
David Broersma
Jane Nicholls
Fall 1993
Implicature 5: Using "And"

Instructions: Read the following examples and answer the questions below.

1:

a. I went downtown and ate an ice cream cone.

b. Yesterday, George took the train to Chicago and went shopping.

c. I went home early and studied for my quiz.

In each of these sentences two things happen. What is the relationship between the two things in terms of time?

2:

d. When Mick Jagger was a teenager, he heard the famous American blues singer, Muddy Waters, singing on the radio, and he promised himself he would become a musician.

Did Mick Jagger decide to become a musician before or after hearing Muddy Waters?

3:

e. Three men have been accused of constructing a bomb and planting it in the parking garage of the World Trade Center in New York. The bomb was detonated and killed 6 people, while injuring over 1000.

Order the events:

-The bomb was detonated	____
-Three men constructed a bomb	____
-The bomb blast killed 6 people	____
-The bomb was planted	____

Discussion: In English, "and" often indicates a sequence of events. So, if we say that Fred went to the store *and* picked up his girlfriend, we mean that Fred picked up his girlfriend after he went to the store.

ESL 111
David Broersma
Fall 1993
Implicature 6: Scalar

Instructions: Read the following examples and answer the questions underneath each example.

Example 1: Bill and Julie are talking about a class they are taking together.

Bill: What do you think of the class?
Julie: **It's okay.**
Bill: What don't you like about it?

Why does Bill ask Julie about what she doesn't like about the class?

Example 2: George is talking to his professor about an application to graduate school.

Prof. Smith: How many letters of recommendation do you have, George?
George: **I have six.**

Is it possible that George has more letters of recommendation than six?

Example 3: John is talking to Mary who has moved to another town and has now returned for a visit.

John: So, are you staying with your parents?
Mary: Well, yes, **I'm staying with my mother.**

Is Mary staying with both of her parents or just one?

Discussion: To illustrate this kind of implicature, consider the following words:

<awful, bad, could be better, so-so, okay, fine, great, wonderful>

These words form a range of evaluations from really terrible to really good. If you asked me how I was doing and I answered "okay," that means that I am not *fine*, *great*, or *wonderful*. In other words, when I choose a word from this list to describe how I am doing, I am excluding the words which are above it. Look at another example:

< 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10>

If I choose number from this list to describe something, I mean that I do not have more. For example, if I say that I have 5 books, then I also have 4 books (because 4 is a part of 5), but I do not have 6 books.

EXCEPTION- THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT RULE

Let's look at Example 2 again. If I change the context of the comment George makes, there is an exception the rule I have just described:

George is talking to the Admissions secretary about his application to the graduate college. In order to be accepted to the University, applicants must turn in at least three letters of recommendation.

Secretary: Do you have three letters of recommendation, George?

George: Yes.

In this case, we know that George actually has six letters of recommendation (from Example 2), but he says he has only three. The specific requirement for a certain number, in this case three, allows George to say that he has three letters of recommendation when he means to say that he has *at least* three letters of recommendation.

Activity (5 minutes): Is this kind of implicature active in your language? Try to think of an example to share with the class.

APPENDIX B
SAMPLES OF CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

POPE Q

Puerto Rico: Are there poinsettias at Christmas?

Sri Lanka: Does a monkey build a house? (Of course not.)
Can you get feathers from a tortoise?

Taiwan (China, Kyrgyzstan, Japan):
Does the sun rise in the west?
Taiwan: Can a man become a turtle?

Kyrgyzstan: Can a pig fly?

Venezuela: Does a frog have hair?

Malay: Do cats grow horns on their noses?
Do fish walk?

Interestingly, most of the Pope Q samples generated by the students had to do with natural phenomena which were fixed in some way. This seems to be true of many of the Pope Q implicatures, even in English.

UNDERSTATED CRITICISM

Most of the examples of Understated Criticism had a misogynistic slant. For example,

Q: Do you think this girl is beautiful?

Taiwan: She is very kind.
She is very safe.
Korea: She wears nice clothes.
She is nice.
Sri Lanka: She has a nice make-up set.

Most of these examples were set in the context of an arranged date. In other words, the parents arrange a meeting with a potential mate and then ask their son (it was always a son) about it. Other classes had similar examples:

Taiwan: Wife: Am I beautiful today?
Husband: Yes, your clothes are very beautiful.

Some were not so loaded, however:

Turkey: Q: Do you like my new car?
A: The tires are nice.

Japan: Q: Hey, I bought a new computer. Isn't it awesome?
A: I don't have much knowledge about computers, but it looks nice.

RELEVANCE

Sri Lanka:
A: 150 people are coming to our party tonight.
B: Do you have Alladin's Lamp?

Taiwan:
A: Would you like to go to a movie?
B: I hear there's a sale at the mall.

Kyrgyzstan:
Setting: You have asked for a drink of water, and your host returns with a very small cup.
B: How much did it [the water] cost?

IRONY

The dialogues below were developed by students to demonstrate that they understood irony implicatures, but they are not examples of implicatures from the students' native countries.

Edith: Hassan is such a good friend. I told him a secret, and he's told it to lots of people.

Or

I told Hassan a secret, and he told it to everyone. He's such a quiet guy!

KuoLung: If you read the newspaper in China, you will find out that it is a free country.
Dave: Is that true?
KuoLung: Yeah. China's so free, you can go to jail anytime you want.